THE RUGBY NEWS.

VOLUME I. RUGBY, MORGAN COUNTY, TENN., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1890. NUMBER 3.

TO MY MOTHER.

How fair you are, my mother!
Ah, though 'tis many a year
Since you were here,
Still do I see your beauteous face,
And with the glow
Of your dark eyes cometh a grace
Of long ago.
So gentle, too, my mother;
Just as of old, upon my brow,
Like benedictions now,
Falleth your dear hand's touch,
And still, as then,
A voice that glads me overmuch
Cometh again,
My fair and gentle mother.

How you have loved me, mother,
I have not power to tell—
Knowing full well
That even in the rest Above
It is your will
To watch and guard me with your love,
Loving me still.
And, as of old, my mother,
I am content to be a child,
By mother's love beguiled
From all these other charms;
So, to the last,
Within thy dear, protecting arms
Hold thou me fast,
My guardian angel, mother.

—Eugene Field, in Chicago News.

A STRANGE CASE.

Why Wallace Harper Would Not Prove His Innocence.

"Prisoner at the bar, what have you to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

A solemn hush pervaded the court-room as the judge addressed the young man in the prisoner's dock as above.

Wallace Harper turned his gaze for an instant toward me. I had defended the young prisoner to the best of my ability and the outcome was a verdict of guilty. From the outset I expected this, although in my utmost soul I believed the unfortunate man innocent. Circumstantial evidence, however, had encompassed him round so completely, it was impossible to override it. I could give the prisoner no look of encouragement. I merely looked dumb, perhaps stolidly indifferent, although I was far from feeling so.

Wallace Harper rose slowly to his feet, until he towered full six feet of noble stature, and gazed fixedly at the judge. His face was pale as death, and when he opened his lips and spoke, the words sounded hollow and unnatural.

"Your honor, what can I say on an occasion like this? I was foredoomed from the start. Our family has always been unfortunate. My father was killed in battle (Gettysburg,) and my poor mother died of a broken heart. My eldest brother fell in one of the battles in the West, the youngest died of yellow fever at Memphis, some years ago, and *I* am the last of the race. I, it seems, am doomed to die on the gallows!"

He paused here, a hot flush shooting into either pale cheek. Would he break down and beg for mercy? It was not in keeping with his cool courage during the trial. I could not help pitying him, and feeling that it would have been much better had he refrained from speaking at all. I dared not look at his face for some moments. At length he was speaking again, and I ventured once more to look toward him. The flush had disappeared, and the prisoner's face was pallid as before.

"I know what the sentence must be, your honor," continued he, with awful calmness. "I have only this to say: I am an innocent man. I lay up nothing against the members of the jury. They thought they were performing a duty; but if there is a future life, in *that* future the truth will be with me, and I shall be vindicated."

He bowed his head and ceased to speak. His words had been impressive. To me they were convincing. I had moved for a new trial when the verdict had been rendered, on the previous day, and now had no more to say.

"Hanged by the neck until dead—Friday, November 9."

These were all the words that reached my ear. I rose to leave the room. The prisoner was led past. I glanced into his white face. A look of settled despair rested on every lineament. I bent forward and whispered a word of hope, mentioning the fact of my determination to move all the powers for a new trial. He said nothing, and soon the court-room was empty.

"It's justice. It was an infamous murder."

I started at sound of voices at my elbow. Two gentlemen were discussing the prisoner and his sentence.

I paused to listen.

"I knew Wallace Harper well. All of his family have died violent deaths. He had a good show with Donald Dunham. He had been with the old gentleman two years. I think the trouble was all on account of the girl, who they say is quite sick because of the death of her father."

"Did the girl think any thing of the clerk?"

"Some say so. I don't know. It seems 'twas on her account that Harper put poison in the old man's wine. It was a foolish as well as a wicked crime."

I walked on. The details of the murder had been recited too many times to interest me now. It had appeared on the trial that Harper was in love with his old employer's only daughter, and that Dunham had quarreled with his confidential clerk in consequence.

On the evening when he (Harper) was to depart Mr. Dunham called him into the library and requested him to drink a social glass of wine with him. It seem that Harper assented. An hour later Donald Dunham was dead. He had died in agony, and with his latest breath accused his clerk of having poisoned him. The dregs of one of the wine-cups were found to contain arsenic, the other being harmless. The confidential clerk was at once arrested, and in one of his pockets a package of arsenic was found. Such evidence was overwhelming. Wallace Harper sent for me, and I undertook his defense. I made as good a fight as possible under the circumstances.

The ante-mortem testimony of Donald Dunham, together with the fact that the two had quarreled, and the finding of the poison in the pocket of Harper, was evidence that I could not overcome.

I went from the court-room to my own pleasant home feeling a weight on my mind that I could not shake off. A few hours later a messenger came to me from the prisoner, requesting an interview.

I at once repaired to the jail.

Wallace Harper greeted me with a pleasant smile, and held out his hand.

"I am satisfied that you did all that a human being could do, Mr. Nelson, and I want to thank you for it, and to tell you that it is my wish that you do nothing toward securing a new trial."

I expressed my surprise at this.

"It would only postpone the inevitable," he said. "Ill luck runs in our family. I suppose I was born to be hung!" and the laugh that followed made my flesh creep.

"But you are innocent?" I said, a sudden doubt coming, unbidden, to my brain.

"I am innocent. I hope you will never doubt that, Mr. Nelson."

A little later I left him, promising not to urge a new trial. I was satisfied that a new trial could not be obtained, and I had only entertained the thought, to delay matters as long as possible.

It was two months to the 9th of November. Much might be done in that time if there had been any foundation on which to stand. As it was, I tried to dismiss the prisoner from my mind and attend to other business. I could not do this, however, and the days and weeks passed, until one day remained before the day set for the execution of the condemned. On this day I visited Wallace Harper once more.

He had lost flesh, and I could see that there was much inward suffering. I became fully convinced that something rested on his mind, and I urged him to make a clean breast of it.

"It could do no good," he declared. "I will die without speaking." And then I left him.

As I passed from the jail another visitor was announced—a vailed woman. It was doubtless the man's sweetheart, come to visit him for the last time. She had been too ill to appear at the trial, and I had never seen her to speak with her since.

The night before the day set for the vindication of the law I passed miserably. I felt that an innocent man was soon to be launched into eternity.

In the gray mists of the morning of November 9 a vailed female walked to my door. I answered the bell in person, and I admitted the visitor to my office-room. Being seated, she threw aside her vail, revealing a young face, pale and thin, and almost beautiful.

Before she spoke I knew that she was the daughter of the late Donald Dunham.

"Is it too late to save Wallace Harper?" she asked, in a tremulous voice.

"Certainly too late," I answered. "Of course, if there was new evidence, of a positive nature, going to show that some other person committed the crime for which he is to suffer, I've no doubt we might save the young man. But—"

"I have that evidence."

"You have? Why in Heaven's name did you not speak sooner, then?" I cried, in a stern voice.

"I dared not," she said, slowly. "I—I must speak now; the world must know the truth. Wallace Harper is innocent. It was *I* who did the deed."

Her whole frame shook like an aspen, and I could see that she was wrought up to an awful pitch of excitement. I could scarcely believe her words, however. It must be that she was driven mad on account of her lover's peril. I requested her to speak, however, and she did so, in rapid, low tones.

"It was *I* who did the deed. I hated to speak sooner. I loved my father, and I did not like to believe him capable of doing an evil deed. He did it, however. He invited Wallace to take wine with him that last evening. I saw him pour the wine, and I saw him drop a powder into one of the goblets. *Then* he called Wallace, and requested him to quaff with him.

"I did not know what the powder was, but an awful fear oppressed me. With a quick movement when father's back was turned I exchanged goblets, and father drained the one intended for his clerk. What followed you know. I was horrified when I learned that a deadly poison had been administered.

"I could not speak. My father a murderer! It was horrible. I realized that my hand had substituted the poison for his lips that he had intended for another. In the excitement of the moment Wallace picked up the folded paper containing the poison that lay near by and dropped it into his pocket, as he testified at the trial. In his dying moments my father cursed the name of Harper and accused him of murdering him.

"I fainted, I think, and I have been near to death since that. I have tried to bring myself to speak more than once, but have been unequal to the task. I am now anxious to have the truth known. Can you save Wallace? He is an innocent man."

There was no time to be lost. I sprang up at once. I visited a magistrate with Miss Dunham, and her affidavit was sent over the wires to the Governor.

We were none too soon. A reprieve was granted, and the facts at once investigated. Miss Dunham adhered to her story, and Wallace Harper corroborated it. He saw her move the glasses, but had refused to speak, lest he should criminate the girl he loved. That was his secret.

A thorough investigation was had, and the story told by the girl accepted. Wallace Harper went forth a free man, and he has since won an honorable place in the business world.

I saw him, five years afterward, for the first time since his narrow escape from the gallows.

"Yes, I am married," he said, when I brought up old times. "No, Miss Dunham is not my wife. Do you know, Mr. Nelson, I have always believed that *she* poisoned her father! I think her mad love unsettled her mind. At any rate, she is now an inmate of an asylum, and hopelessly insane."

It was a strange case. I always believed Harper innocent. As to Miss Dunham, I hold grave doubts.—J. M. Merrill, in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly.

THE TRANSITION STAGE.

It Is Without Question a Sad Time in a Woman's Life.

There is a time in a woman's life when she is too old for the dances and frolic of the young and too young for the quiet corner of the old. No class claims her. She feels often like an alien from the commonwealth of womanhood. In charitable work and in social life the invisible line is passed. No one invites her now to preside at the fancy booth or hasten the sale of flowers with her gracious smile. Neither is she asked to give the dignity of her age and position as one of the patronesses of the fair. She is laughed at if she dresses in the gay colors her soul loves, or scolded by her family for always wearing black.

She has no part in the play, but is quietly relegated to the position of stage setter and prompter, while younger and older women pose and win applause. Her beauty is not at its best. She has neither the fair girlish face which is the prophecy of what will be, nor the sweet old face which is the history of what has been. White hair does not crown her with glory, and she has lost the golden curls of her youth. The blossom has faded and the fruit does not yet compensate for its loss.

The trials of the transition state envelop her in her home. Sometimes she feels that her husband is almost deserting her for the young daughter, who is the second edition of the girl he fell in love with years ago.

The solving of the domestic problem has not made such drafts upon his mental and physical resources as it has upon hers. He is a comparatively young man, and no one dreams of asking him to step aside from any familiar path.

At times she wonders if she is not a childless woman. She was necessary to her little children, but her growing sons and daughters do not seem to need her; at least they do not cling to her with the tender caresses of their babyhood. Studies, teachers, classmates and embryo love affairs fill their lives so full that the mother almost feels crowded out.—Chicago Herald.

—Both of Boston.—Belle—"The course of true love never did run smooth. What do you think of that truism, Bess?" Bess—"I think that 'smooth' ought to read 'smoothly.'"—Yankee Blade.

THE PIGMY RACES.

The Dwarfs of Mythology and Those Seen by Stanley in Africa.

Not the least interesting of the discoveries made by Mr. Stanley on his latest expedition is that of the Wambatti—the dwarf tribe living between the Upper Aruhwimi and the Nepoko. It has long been a well-known fact that the Pygmies of Homer, Herodotus and Ktesias—those of whom Pliny speaks as "dwelling among the marshes where the Nile rises"—are something more than mere mythical beings, and almost every exploration of any importance undertaken of late years has thrown fresh light on the existence of a primitive African race, of whom the Wambatti are in all probability one of many fragments, scattered through central and southern Africa.

These tribes, usually designated dwarfs or pygmies, are numerous, bearing a marked resemblance to each other and showing a marked difference from the people among whom they are scattered. Their surest and most permanent characteristic is their hair, which is woolly, but instead of being, as in the negro, evenly distributed over the scalp, grows in small tufts. This appearance, according to Prof. Virchow, is not due to the fact that the hair grows on some spots and not on others, but to a peculiarity in the texture of the hair itself, which causes it to roll naturally into closely curled spiral locks, leaving the intervening pieces of scalp bare.

The name of dwarfs, applied by some to these people, has been objected to as implying deformity or arrested growth, and therefore conveying a wrong impression. Nothing of the kind can be said of the African Pygmies, who, though short of stature, are well-shaped people of perfectly normal formation.

The section of the Pygmy race with which Europeans have come most in contact is the Hottentots and Bushmen. The former call themselves "Khoi-Khoi," Hottentots being merely a nickname given by the early Dutch settlers, who declared that the natives spoke an unintelligible language consisting only of sounds like hot and tot. That keen observer, Moffat, as long ago as the first decade of this century, noticed the distinct and and peculiar characteristics of the Hottentots and recognized their racial identity with the Bushmen.

Surveying the Pygmy race as a whole, we find them (shorn of the mythical and magical glamour with which distance and mystery have invested them) not so very different, after all, from other human beings, but still sufficiently interesting. No well-authenticated adult seems to be much less than four feet six inches, while Dr. Petermann thinks that the Pygmies, on the whole, run about a head shorter than the average negro.

I can not attempt to deal with the origin of the Pygmy race, or its relationship to the Andamese and the Veddahs of Ceylon, who are said to have some characteristics in common with the Pygmies. But it seems clear that they were once spread over a great part, if not the whole, of the continent; that they were broken up and partially exterminated by the advent of the stronger dark races; and that, as a race, they are passing away. It is interesting to look at an analogous case in Europe. A race of small stature, light frame and comparative low type, scarcely, if at all, advanced beyond the hunter stage, occupied the British islands and the northwestern part of the continent. They were partly massacred or enslaved, partly driven into the mountains by their Keltic conquerers; and in the lonely recesses of the hills and woods—what with their weakness and their strength, their cunning and their skill in metals, their music and their underground dwellings and their strange, uncanny wisdom—a growth of legend and poetry sprang up about them, till they were no longer known, save as elves, gnomes, trolls or "good people," whom one dare not name.—Gentleman's Magazine.

The Uniforms Too Bright.

It is pointed out as one of the consequences of the universal introduction of smokeless powder which is now imminent, that, as soldiers will have to seek all possible cover, it will be necessary to multiply the number of orderlies and messengers, and the Commander-in-Chief will have to take his position in the centre of action to watch every thing and be ready to modify the original plan, swiftly if needful. The change from brilliant uniforms to those of soberer and safer hues will involve such expense that it is likely to be deferred for a while, but the glitter of helmets and bayonets is now so dangerously visible that already the French Minister of War has given orders that in the army of the republic these shall be dulled with bronze.—Chicago News.

—When you see a boy with beautiful, long, yellow curls there is very little doubt as to who is the head of the family.—Indianapolis Journal.

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

—When a girl is in love she always thinks the young man is perfect, and he agrees with her.—Somerville Journal.

—Mrs. Blossom (to her husband who has come home with a black eye)—"That's what you get for riding a bicycle." Mr. Blossom (mournfully)—"No, my dear, it's what I get for not being able to ride one."—The Epoch.

—Did Not Return It.—Tom—"Did Phil return that umbrella he carried away from your house by mistake?" Jack—"No, but he lent it to me the other night when I was caught out in the rain."—Yankee Blade.

—"I see you are going to seed your tennis-court." "No, what put that idea into your head?" "It's all plowed up." "O, I know. Miss Hicks, of New York, has been playing on it with high-heeled shoes."—Harper's Bazar.

—A Chicago photographer is coining money. When he wants a customer to look pleasant he points to a sign which reads, "Absolute Divorce Guaranteed for 50 Cents." He has taken some wonderful pictures.—Yonkers Statesman.

—"I shall now give you the effect of distance," he said to her, and he sang so low as to be scarcely heard. "A little further, please," she said cruelly, and he picked up his voice and went away with it into the chilly night.—Washington Star.

—No Trouble to Identify.—Schumbleworth—"Why, I can tell a pen-and-ink artist's work just as quick as I can tell his handwriting." Scribbletown—"Yes; I notice they are always pretty careful to sign their names.—Puck.

—We hoped that with the waning of the year
The boiled-shirt girl would go, to reappear
In different guise;
But no, alas! They're right here with us yet.
Appearing still (to man's sincere regret)
Indifferent guys.
—Indianapolis Journal.

—Wonders of Science.—Lady—"Do you take instantaneous photographs?" Photographer—"Yes, madam; I can photograph a humming-bird on the wing, or a swallow in its flight." Lady "I want my baby's picture taken." Photographer—"Yes, madam. Get the little fellow ready, and I will prepare the chloroform."—N. Y. Weekly.

—A Domestic Pointer.—Mrs. De Cott—"And so you won't let me have that flat although I am willing pay in advance." Agent—"No, madam. You have too many children." Mrs. De Cott—"But all flat, and house owners, too, talk the same way. What am I to do? Even if I have children I must live." Agent (confidentially)—"Move into the suburbs and stay there until malaria kills a few of 'em off."—Good News.

—It is announced that by a new process a $75 dog can be boiled down and converted into five cents' worth of glue. It is not likely that this discovery will induce many owners of $75 dogs to convert the animals into glue as a money-making scheme. A greater need of the day is a plan whereby a five-cent dog may be boiled down and converted into $75 worth of glue.—Norristown Herald.

—A Disgusted Lawyer.—"What makes you look so disgusted, Sharp?" asked one young lawyer of another, the other day. "Why, you know that old skinflint, Blunt, don't you?" "The millionaire? Yes?" "Well, he died yesterday, without making a will, and here are half the lawyers in town starving. His heirs will probably get every cent, the confounded old hunks."

A GENTEEL TRANSACTION.

There Was Nothing About It to Attract the Attention of the Vulgar.

I sat in the big railroad depot in Philadelphia one day last summer with a valise on the seat beside me. By and by I went to the news-stand to get a paper, and when I returned my valise was gone. I went to the depot policeman, and after taking a look through the depot he called a detective. We got track of a man with a valise on Broad street, and we followed after him for two hours. We finally cornered him in a saloon, just off of Market street. He stood at the bar with a fresh-drawn glass of beer in his hand, and my valise lay at his feet. He knew me in a moment, and he turned and said:

"Just a moment, please. Owing to some chronic trouble in my throat I have to drink slowly and with care. Don't say any thing until I get this beer down."

He was about two minutes drinking it, and when he had finished he wiped off his mouth, straightened up his wilted collar and said:

"We will now proceed to the business in hand. I am a gentleman, in the society of gentlemen, and we will all behave ourselves. Let there be nothing to attract the attention of the vulgar."

Next day, after getting six months in the jug for his offense, he blandly said to me:

"I'm a gentleman, you are a gentleman and his Honor is a gentleman. It is a real pleasure to do business with such people.—Detroit Free Press.